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A Dream of Gold— And What Came of It

By MARY H. COATES.

"WE MUST get out of here—the sooner the better—that's all there is to it. November in sight; no work, no pay dirt—no, not even a sign of color have I ever found on that claim."

Jim King looked across the gulch to "Prize Bar" claim, which, in the wake of the latest gold stampede he had hastily staked; and to which, in his haste and premature excitement, he had brought his family.

"Prize Bar!" We ought to have named it "Prize Humbug," he muttered from his seat on a log doing chair duty, and absently tossed bits of twigs and fir cones into the campfire as he summed up their situation.

"Don't fret, dear," said his wife, observing his downcast looks as she came from the tent where she had been putting the children to sleep. "Things may not really be as bad as they appear."

"Couldn't be worse; grub nearly gone, money, too, and I've rustled among the boys for a job, but none of them really need a roustabout. No, couldn't be worse."

"O, yes, they could—but finish your pipe, and come to bed. It's dark now, but you know light comes in the morning—who knows? sleep often helps the brain to solve knotty problems."

The flames of the campfire flared up fitfully, giving weird, white highlights to the trunks of the firs in the shadow; and above, their plumed tops were veiled, in haziness by the waning moon.

Under the influence of the balsam-laden fragrance that floated up from the fir boughs spread deep over the tent floor, the remembrance of their harassing situation faded from Mrs. King's mind. The tired body found rest, and the weary brain was soon lulled to sleep; but the dream-mind flitted on, here and there, weaving mountain, forest and campfire into a daedalus net work, which gradually narrowed, through the dream alembic, to fixed distinctness; and the moonlight on the stretching firtops, the hollow blackness beneath, and the glowing coals became a sunlit valley, a dark cave and down in its depths glittered crystals—globules—what? The brightness of them pierced her eyes.

With a start she awoke and saw the morning sun shining straight into the tent through a tiny opening in the folds of the fly. "Well! What a dream of gold it was!—and woven of nothing but sunshine. It must certainly portend good luck—but from earth or sky—which, I wonder—that's the point. O, for a dream book! My kingdom for a dream book!" she said under her breath, then louder: "Jim, are you there?"

"Yes, and breakfast is nearly ready. You were all sleeping so soundly I thought I wouldn't disturb you; but it's late enough."

"We'll be there in a few minutes. Come, children, breakfast is ready. Doesn't the coffee smell good?" and the quietness of the tent was at an end—drowned in the children's laughing chatter.

"Breakfast!" called a cheery voice again, and they trooped out. After all had been served, Mrs. King went to the fire and began marking in the cool ashes with a long stick.

"Jim, is there a valley anywhere near that runs along so? High mountains on this side, and scattered fir trees on this ridge, and over here a great spur of rocks that dips into the chaparral below?" She illustrated with the right hand and with the left carefully held her blue calico skirt back from the fire.

"Of course," he answered, carelessly.

"Really? Truly?" She spoke eagerly, yet doubtfully.

"Certainly. You have pictured Bear canyon quite correctly. It is over beyond that peak where you see a broken tree standing alone. Why, what of it?"

"Just this: I saw it in my dream last night; and I'm going to ask you to go over there and hunt for a cave and—"

"O, yes, I know," anticipating her recital. "Cave, gold, pocket nuggets in a sand ridge, un-wealthy, healthy, and happy ever after," checking off with his fingers and ending in a half-trilled bar from a popular mining song.

"Well, you'll go," ignoring the thrusts.

"I think not. In fact, no use to go. There's no cave there."

"Yes, my dear, there is," confidently smiling.

"No, Emily, there's no cave in that canyon. Have some more coffee?" as he poured a second cup for himself and set the smoke-blackened coffee boiler on fresh coals.

"But, Jim? If I saw the cave correctly in my dream, why should not I see the cave correctly, too?" she persisted.

"I agreed to the valley; but to the cave—never! Can't explain it. Probably Morpheus took you to his abode last night and while you were there you were cast under some spell that gave the appearance of reality." He presented a wise and profoundly interested countenance.

"Very probably. But you possibly remember, too, that Morpheus is a guardian of dreams, and fashions them as the gods desire them to be given to us. Surely I have favor in their sight."

"Still, Emily, I think your dream came through the ivory gates of the dream-palace. Have another cup of coffee—do."

"No, thanks. And you needn't try to take my mind from that cave. You are going over to Bear canyon to-day to dig for gold in a cave you will find there. Do, please, give this one day's work to please a whim of mine," coming around the table and giving his cheek a coaxing pat.

"O, pshaw! Well, I suppose I must—there's nothing else when a woman—"

"I'll have your lunch ready by the time you have saddled Mag. Children, run for papa's pick and shovel," she broke in, in cheerful haste.

Jim King saddled the little roan mare and led her up to the camp, tied his dinner pail to the cantle, mounted, and shouldered pick and shovel, with a hang-dog look.

"Now, Jim, look for a big dogwood—that's the mark, and there are wild blackberry vines growing over the mouth of the cave."

"Anyway, what's the good—supposing I should find it—the land's all staked," was his parting shot as he waved a farewell and rode down the slope.

With a happy, confident heart, Mrs. King watched her husband ride away, till he was hidden by the low growing shrubbery along the winding trail. Somewhere in the distance a quail piped a warning note.

"Jim's gone that far already," she said, but she could not see what the quail saw: the pick and shovel echoed under a thicket of tall huckleberries, and the rider pass on, without them, taking the fork that led directly away from Bear canyon.

How still the morning was—not a touch of wind anywhere! Mrs. King lifted her eyes to the scenic splendor of her surroundings. On every border were the mountains in the quivering haze of sunshine, unfeeling in ever changing tints and shadowy lights. Peak beyond peak; as far as the eye could reach, they rose, grand, still, majestic and untamed, expressive of imperial solitude.

"Stir! Stir! Stir!" said a noisy bluejay, and she turned to her work. The children were happy when camping and to them the day passed quickly with school books and excursions up and down the mountain side for nuts, mosses and lichens, and in untiring, never-discouraged searches for "Gold." And a family of inquisitive jays must receive instructions in the art of behavior, for which all the table scraps were carefully hoarded in all kinds of secret places, and doled out according to the merits earned at each performance.

Slowly the vivid noon-blue of the mountains changed to blue-gray of even and deepened to purple, making them seem nearer and clearer than in the morning; and as the shadows gathered near, a little bird trilled a timid, sweet vesper hymn.

"Come, mamma, isn't it time to cook supper?" The children brought in dry limbs and cones for the night's fire. "There he comes! Papa's coming, children—wave your hands!"

The horseman coming up the grade doubled up his palms and sent a shrill whistle echoing along the ridge.

"Here, children, give Mag a good supper. She's tired," he said, after unsaddling the mare. Then he poured water in a basin, picked up a bit of soap and began lathering his hands vigorously.

"Dirty, aren't they?" with provoking coolness.

"Yes, but, Jim—what?" interrogated his wife.

"Oh, I found the cave just where you said I would; but cave, claim, and all are owned by a man over in Ashland. I went over and found the fellow—runs a little coffee house there and didn't value your cave very highly. Said he didn't propose to risk anything on such a picnic, but I could work it 'halvers.'" King ran on with remarkable glibness.

"Yes, of course; but what else?" she insisted hurriedly.

"Well," he continued with a tantalizing drawl, "it is a vein of quartz that runs down the porphyry and the gold—"

"Pocket gold! Didn't I tell you? I knew it. I knew it! Now you'll believe in dreams!" she almost screamed in her firm belief.

"Don't you want to see a nugget?" and he handed her a yellow Bellefleur.

"Jim King! How could you do such a thing?" and on her face chagrin and perplexity struggled for supremacy.

"Aren't you ashamed to play such a shabby trick?" she managed to say.

"Well, no. You see, you were so bound and determined I should find a nugget that I was afraid to come back without one; and it's the best I could

do," an amused grin dancing in his eyes.

"I see. And what else?"

"I met Sam Adams on the way. He put me on the track of a job as foreman on a ranch down below. So I went over and met the owner; and decided to abandon Prize Bar for farm life and good pay. My time begins to-morrow, and we'll begin packing the first thing in the morning. So, Emily, even if your wonderful dream didn't bring us the gold you expected, it brought something which I hope will be worth far more to us."—Pacific Monthly.

Directing Him.

Parched Drummer (in Kansas hamlet)—Where can I get a drink in this confounded prohibition town?

Tavern Landlord—Come out on the porch. Now, do you see, halfway up the street, on the right-hand side, a weather-beaten one-story buildin', with a whappy-jawed hitchin'-post in front of it?

"Yes!"

"Well, that's about the only place in town where you can't get a drink, if you've got the price—nobody lives there!"—Puck.

American Invasion of Scotland.

An American tourist in Scotland cites a new example of "the American invasion," showing that what is usually considered the most thoroughly Scottish Scotch organizations, the famous "Black Watch" regiment, drills according to West Point tactics, is armed with Springfield rifles, and its band wears uniforms cut in New York, uses instruments made in Chicago, and plays Sousa's marches.

PATCHES PASTED ON SHIRTS.

Quick and Simple Method of Repairing Rents Employed in Laundry Work.

"When I made up my laundry bundle early in the week," said the middle-aged bachelor, according to the New York Sun, "I found one of the shirts that were to go in so torn that I had some doubts about sending it, but I let it go. To-day when my laundry came back, and I looked it over, I didn't see that torn shirt at first. There was the right number of shirts there, but no torn one. But, looking again, I discovered that the torn one was there, but now finely mended. The body of the shirt, which had been torn in one place away from the bosom for a space of three or four inches, had been drawn back into place, and was now held there securely by a patch pasted on the under side and ironed on."

"I feel bound to say that the job awakened my admiration. As a quick and easy way of mending it was great. All that you had to do was to take a square of cotton cloth of suitable size, spread starch on it, bring the disunited parts together on it, and slam down on it once or twice with a hot iron, and the shirt was mended. I had heard of mending tablecloths in that way by pasting on a new patch, and ironing it down, but I never before heard of mending shirts in that way. Yet it's certainly all right for shirts at some seasons."

"The patched patch in this use would really be better as a winter than a summer patch. It might be melted off."

EXPENSIVE RABBITS.

The Costly Game Preserve of a Famous French Writer, and a Neighbor's Trick.

An amusing story is told by the Comte de Mats-Units concerning Guy de Maupassant, who once maintained near his home a rabbit-warren of a few acres in the midst of cultivated fields. The enterprise was a source of plentiful income to the Normandy peasants, who took the opportunity to plant choice vegetables in the adjoining fields. Then they demanded large compensation for the alleged damage done by their neighbor's rabbits. Every year De Maupassant had to pay heavily, and the peasants began to feel that a rabbit-warren was an excellent neighbor.

After a few years, however, the owner of the warren began to grow tired of the arrangement. He reckoned that under the existing state of things the few rabbits he shot cost him about \$20 each, which was rather too much, even for an enthusiastic sportsman. So he determined to destroy the game preserve.

It was not much trouble. There were only four or five burrows in the enclosure, and a few ferrets soon killed all the occupants.

One night, after all the rabbits had been destroyed, the owner happened to visit his former preserve, and detected a man skulking along under the trees, with a large bag on his back. De Maupassant at once jumped to the conclusion that the man had come to steal wood. When he challenged him, the supposed thief took to his heels, leaving the bag behind him. It was found to be filled with rabbits of both sexes.

The man was no thief, but a neighbor of the writer, who, shrewdly reasoning that there could be no more damages if there were no rabbits, had thought it advisable to restock the warren.

SURE DEATH TO MOSQUITOES.

Kerosene Oil Distributed Over Surface of Water Where They Breed Kills Insects.

The method of using kerosene to exterminate mosquitoes is explained by Popular Mechanics as follows:

"There are several ways by which war against mosquitoes can be successfully waged. The best method is to drain the swampy regions in which the insect breeds, but where this cannot be done a small quantity of kerosene oil will remedy the nuisance."

"When a thin film of oil is distributed over the surface of the water it seals up the young mosquitoes breathing funnel, causing death. If people living in country places or those camping out, even where there is no stagnant water, will see that every open receptacle, tub, or barrel is treated once or twice a month with a spoonful of kerosene they will relieve themselves of much misery. When stagnant ponds are treated in this manner, the treatment being repeated once in every 20 days, in order to catch each succeeding generation, life in the neighborhood may be made bearable where once it was a burden."

"The people in an entire neighborhood may be miserable from one small breeding place, and they may be made correspondingly happy by the use of oil. It is estimated that an ounce of oil is enough for 15 square feet of surface."

TREES ARE TREASURES.

The Destruction of Many in This Country Has Made Remaining Old Ones Very Valuable.

Time changes all things, and time is changing the public and private estimate of trees in this country. When the pioneers came upon a vast wilderness the trees were as much opposed to their making comfortable dwellings as were the copper-skinned savages. They made war upon the forest with more zeal than judgment; they slaughtered and laid waste, says the Pittsburg Post. With such beginnings of the people their constituted authorities have been slow to make laws for the protection of mere trees, though gradually the worth of the latter has come to be understood by many. Old trees soon will be held as they should be, to be sacred, and young trees as something to be encouraged, fostered and trained in the way they should go. It is only a few years since Dr. Marshall, of this state, astonished the public by bringing suit against a telephone company for hacking branches off some stately trees because they interfered with the stringing or proper insulation of its wires. The courts sustained the doctor's contention that ancient trees are treasures. The telephone company will not soon forget the fact, for it was compelled to pay smartly for the destruction wrought.

A TAILOR'S SHREWD TRICK.

Makes Overcharge in His Statement to Bring Slave-Paying Customers to Time.

"You've made a mistake in my bill," said a young man excitedly, recently to the proprietor of a prominent tailoring house, relates the Chicago Post. "That can't be," answered the tailor, mildly. "Oh, but it is so," exclaimed the youth in a hurry. "Look here! Ten dollars too much charged on this bill." The proprietor compared the bill with his books. "You're right, Mr. Blank," he admitted. "I'll take ten dollars off, and how much did you say you wanted to pay on account?"

The young man grew red, coughed, and finally produced a five-dollar note. "That works every time," continued the tailor to an interested bystander, after the customer had departed. Nothing brings a man here in such a hurry as to overcharge him on his bill. When a customer gets a little backward and dodges the place I send him a bill overcharging him. He comes on a rush to have the mistake corrected, and a little diplomacy does the rest. Best of all, it doesn't hurt his feelings, as would a visit from a collector."

PRINTERS ARE TOO SLOW.

The Value of Government Reports Is Impaired by Delays in Publication.

The public as well as the government suffers greatly by the dilatory methods in vogue in the printing of official reports. The value of work done by the scientific bureaus maintained by the government especially is lamentably lessened by the tardiness with which the results are given to the public. Official information does not make its appearance until the question has become obsolete or enough light has been shed on it through the medium of a more energetic press.

The delay, says the Chicago Chronicle is caused by the difficulty in getting the reports printed. In many cases the manuscripts prepared under the direction of the bureaus do not see the light of publication for three years. Pressure, it is claimed, is frequently required to rescue the fruits of laborious research, and the author of a timely and well-designed paper is met by most persistent and disheartening delays.

Miscellaneous.

Strange Arctic Find.
Petried tropical fruits have been found in coal from Spitzbergen, the inland group in the arctic ocean, midway between Greenland and Nova Zembla.

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